

From intercultural education to critical education in cultural diversity: the UNESCO Diversity Kit for Youth¹

Gemma Carbó Ribugent ²

Translation: Mariana Daverio³ | Luciana Saladino⁴

General Supervision: Silvina Pereyra⁵

Summary

One of the specifics of the contemporary social and economic paradigm that we call the knowledge society is the central role of the relationship between education and culture. In the schools of many countries culture no longer exists as a singular element. Very diverse cultural forms of life are looking for new ways to promote conviviality that agree with the universal values of democracy and respect for human rights.

This situation is not new, but what are different today are the dimensions and the global nature of the situation. Some educational approaches give greater recognition to cultural diversity -multicultural education and intercultural education- and try to modify the tradition of educational policies that tend towards standardization and homogeneity.

This paper presents a didactic proposal for education in cultural diversity promoted by UNESCO in response to point 10 of the Convention of the Diversity of Cultural

Expressions already ratified by more than 160 countries.

The Diversity Kit is an educational resource developed from a perspective that goes beyond multicultural recognition and the challenges of intercultural dialogue to propose a specific educational approach to cultural diversity in agree with the pedagogical perspective of critical education. The Diversity Kit is an interactive game for teenagers that helps them think critically and understand the positive nature and usefulness of identities and cultural expressions, not only for their own personal development, but also for their economic inclusion and professional placement and, more importantly, for the attainment and sustainability of democratic and cultural citizenship.

Key words: Cultural Diversity - Intercultural Education - Creativity - Innovation - Pedagogical Tool - Critical Education - Sustainability - Democratic Citizenship.

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Introduction

This article has been conceived from a cultural perspective rather than from a strictly educational point of view. The UNESCO Chair in Cultural Policies and Cooperation of the University of Girona⁶, where I currently work as project coordinator and researcher, was commissioned by the UNESCO to design a pedagogical tool on the principles of the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions. In this paper, I set out to pose the reflection upon critical education and intercultural education which was generated throughout the development of the Diversity Kit⁷ project as well as the outcomes of the process.

In educational settings, in which universities are included, culture is in general viewed as the common substratum across the societal system which organizes the ways of coexistence. Culture is also, and more specifically, what forges the educational contents of school curriculums; so much debatable and controversial nowadays.

Whilst this is undoubtedly a fact and no one challenges this anthropological dimension of culture, it is also true that the management of the cultural practices and culture -understood as the field of creativity and space of dialogue with the creators, as well as the dissemination actions and cultural equipment, cultural communication, and the like- has been shaping its own system and its own parallel policy, often far removed from the educational one, since the mid-twentieth

century. Indeed, the cultural sector has become the specific field of public policies in many of our countries.

From Barcelona, the so-called cultural management (sociocultural animation or cultural dynamisation in other regions) has gone through different ways of understanding itself. From covering only scenic and plastic arts, i.e. the former fine arts, life and cultural policy, it has progressively broadened its area of intervention accompanying the theoretical and disciplinary reflection processes that have been dedicated to culture.

Since the mid-twentieth century, history, anthropology, psychology and, especially sociology, have contributed with new perspectives and have promoted the discussion about the reproduction of social structures and cultural habits from cultural and educational institutions. This has generated political demands such as the claim for specific protection rights of diverse cultures considered as minorities, and the consolidation of cultural studies as a specific discipline.

Thus, in a gradual way the monolithic European thought is assuming that many and very different cultural realities coexist in time and space and in different contexts (Levi Strauss, 2000).

As Patricio Rivas (2012: s/n) points out:

This way, this first cycle of the establishment of cultural diversity, which sprouted in decades of deep social mobilizations and in an argumentative framework disjointed by theoretical and analytical models of critical nature, was linked to the recognition of the civil, economic and political rights of different sectors of society, whose own existence was intended to be denied, subordinated and assimilated.

Culture, cultures and development

Back in the 1980s, the predominant cultural policy -illustrated, bourgeois and Western- centered in the cultural management of the artistic and monumental patrimony and in the performing arts, namely visual and plastic, was definitely challenged as the unique model, and in any case, as the most appropriate model to guarantee a firm commitment to the development of countries and communities with lower rates in the standard of living and/or from rural or run-down urban areas.

Among other reasons, from the 90s onwards, culture as a system has been broadened and transformed, as well as the rest of the paradigms and realities, by the socio-technological and digital revolution which has altered and definitely intervened in its contents and in its expressive ways; increasingly diverse and interrelated. Reconsidering the article by Patricio Rivas (2012: s/n); (...) Gradually, the territories of the diverse, which were linked to ethical topics and to the civil rights movement in their beginnings, have started to broaden its actors, perspectives and plots. A multiple polyphony of diversities bursts: gender topics, the youth, urban worlds, the re-emergence of the local, the environment, biodiversity, new aesthetics; thus fostering a twist in the political, intellectual and ethical notions of cultural diversity. (...)

Therefore, in the last decades of the twentieth century, development studies evolved the epistemological debate and the critical view on the centrality of cultural factors in the evolution theories and in the concept of progress. These

studies today coincide in advocating that development and progress will only be plausible and sustainable - and will be conceived as such-, provided they are based on diverse social and cultural realities and that they arise from the dreams and identities of their protagonists (Escobar, 2010).

In short, these social and cultural realities are no longer exclusively related to territorial identities but to group identities, the latter being grounded on the increasingly intense forms of relationships among the protagonists, in a world that is rapidly interconnecting due to communication technologies and the high mobility of people and ideas.

In the same vein, the program of the World Decade for Cultural Development (1988-1997)⁸ that the United Nations devoted to cultural diversity contributed to the understanding of the critical link between cultural diversity and environmental sustainability. Moreover, culture as the fourth pillar of sustainable development was first considered.

Since then, changes in cultural policies and in cultural management have been vital, for this new international perspective is realized through the recommendation to the Member States of the United Nations to adopt measures to guarantee the preservation and promotion of the necessary conditions to ensure cultural diversity on their territories.

This new approach to cultural action was fulfilled through a number of documents which proved to be increasingly relevant in legal and political terms, such as Pérez de Cuellar's report, 'Our Creative Diversity'⁹.

This report became a Declaration on Cultural Diversity¹⁰ in 2001, and in 2005 the 'Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions'¹¹ was adopted by UNESCO. In 2010, UNESCO published the 'Second World Report: Investing on Cultural Diversity and Intercultural Dialogue'¹².

Meanwhile, how does the educational system react towards these changes of cultural paradigm?

Cultural diversity as an educational setting

Education as a system of public policies was consolidated by the nation states in modern times and responds to the configuration of that unique cultural imaginary aforementioned; which is founded on the belief in the superiority of the written Eurocentric Western culture.

Intercultural education began to be regarded in the U.S. during the 1950s, when economic and social growth prompted high social concentrations in American cities and a strong presence of completely different cultural realities in schools. As Burke (2010) points out, the coexistence of cultures has never been easy. Moreover, the formulas selected by the different countries to solve the problem have been historically different and clearly linked to educational policies: assimilation or multiculturalism epitomized the first phase; interculturality and dialogue among cultures have been the great scheme in recent decades.

Nowadays, the concept that best defines the format of these relationships is 'cultural hybridity' (Burke, 2010), since diversity, as it is evidenced in cultural and creative expressions, is everywhere and it no longer relates to territory or ethnicity, but each individual has multiple possibilities of freely choosing the options to participate in cultural life and their own cultural identity, as it is pointed out in the report about the 2004 United Nations Development Program entitled 'Cultural Liberty in Today's Diverse World'¹³.

International political and legal consideration regarding the role of culture is becoming more important. This fact is mainly grounded on the contribution that cultural and creative industries are making in the context of the new economy the knowledge society demands. Creativity and cultural diversity seem to be turning into the philosophical stone of the new millennium. Hence, the value of cultural expressions is increasingly gaining recognition, and in turn, the necessity of promoting them through educational strategies is also growing.

The demand for changes in educational models is progressively rising. The recognition of cultural and artistic education¹⁴ is being renewed along with the debate over critical and intercultural education. However, the alliance between education and culture is not an easy one, and interculturalist discourse has been left alone -isolated from the changes of cultural paradigms. Based on our experience in the design of the pedagogical Kit to work on the values of the Convention of Cultural

Diversity and profiting from this meeting on Intercultural Education and Critical Education, we are able to suggest a different path to take, a path which calls for critical education in cultural diversity.

Critical education as an educational strategy in cultural diversity

The Right to Education is to be found among the general rights more closely associated with economic, political and social pacts. The right to education occupies a pivotal position among cultural rights, since it is the right that ensures respect, and the protection and the development of the right to identity.

This right renders respect for other cultural rights in particular, and for human rights in general. Likewise, it is the very principle of all development, both individual and collective, and the first indicator of a policy or a development program.

If participation in cultural life from the recognition of one's own identity in a free environment is a fundamental right, education must then be aimed to guarantee effective ways to exercise it. In order to achieve this goal, education must adapt to the conditions and possibilities of cultural diversity as a fundamental pillar of sustainability.

As it was pointed out in the previous section, the Second World Report of UNESCO (2010) "Investing on Cultural Diversity and Intercultural Dialogue", reasserts the importance of diversity in a wide range of social fields, including education. As regards education in

particular, the report suggests that "If cultural diversity is not taken into account, education cannot fulfill its role of learning to live together" (2010: 32).

As Xavier Besalú has stated,

Tot plegat obliga l'Educació (en majúscules) a preocupar-se menys de la transmissió d'informació i més de l'anàlisi crítica i reposada de la informació i la formació rebuda en d'altres processos socialitzadors, de reconstruir el coneixement experiencial i de viure la cultura. La missió de l'educació no és pas la de promoure les cultures particulars (tot i que cal partir, evidentment, i legitimar les històries particulars), sinó la de preparar els futurs ciutadans per viure en un món més obert i interdependent, treballar per constuir un nou marc cultural que doni sentit a l'existència. L'emergència imparable del concepte de diversitat s'inscriu també en aquest context de reivindicació d'allò personal, del present, que ens ha portat la ruptura postmoderna. La diversitat és, a hores d'ara, una realitat absolutament natural i legítima. Però en la tradició occidental moderna la diferencia sempre s'ha vist com una amenaça, font de pors i de sospites. (...) educar en la diversitat és el nou paradigma educatiu en la societat complexa i planetària del segle XXI. (Besalú, 2001: s/d)¹⁵

In this sense, Jesús Martín Barbero (2006: s/d) has also suggested,

Understanding this transformation in culture forces us to assume that today identity/difference implies two diametrically different dimensions, which, so far, have been radically opposed: one that is related to roots, customs and territory, long-established and symbolically dense memory; and the other makes reference to networks and fluxes, to migrations and mobilities, to instantaneousness and unpinning. English anthropologists have expressed this new identity through the splendid imagery of moving roots, or better, roots in movement, which Catalan anthropologist Eduard Delgado¹⁶ translated by claiming that "you cannot live without roots, but too many roots block your way".

This critical education in cultural diversity is attained in a very special manner through the special necessity of educating in cultural diversity communication, from a perspective of a training and literacy campaign in the languages and diverse forms of expression that characterize the global environment. Following again the line of thought of Jesús Martín Barbero:

For plurality of cultures to be politically considered, it is of paramount importance that diversity be narrated in the multimedia language that nowadays pervades through languages through the double-sided movement of translations - from oral to written discourse, to the audiovisual and the hipertextual- and hybridizations, i.e. that interculturality in which the dynamics of the economy and world-culture mobilize not only the heterogeneity of groups and their readjustment to global pressures, but also the coexistence of diverse codes and narratives within a single society, shaking in this way the knowledge of identity that has been held so far. (Bogotá, 2004)¹⁷

The Diversity Kit, a specific proposal to work on critical education in cultural diversity

How can we integrate the diversity of cultures in a school model based on the defense of a unique way of understanding the world and on the control of information and communication? It is essential to continue working on the basis of the critical education paradigm, whose validity is absolute in this new context. However, this critical perspective at a planetary scope needs global ethics and should be set in a universal context of cultural diversity (Morin, 2011). We understand that it will be possible to build

a critical perspective without falling into cultural relativism if we recognize identity and cultural diversity as cultural rights that will have to be established at the same level as educational rights.

Cultural identity is inherent to each individual. Non-respect of this identity is a violation to the integrity of human beings and deters the proper exercise of human rights. Identity does not consist in withdrawal, but it is the face with which every person -alone or as a group- identifies and shows to others.

Without the recognition of this face, cultural identity loses its freedom. The Declaration on Cultural Rights is accomplished through a series of specific rights¹⁸, among which we may highlight the right to identity and cultural patrimony, the right to access and participation in cultural life, the right to information and communication, and the right to education and training.

These rights are restored by individuals, minority groups and dominant cultures in diversity environments. Social and cultural diversity is a reality and a piece of historical evidence that is being acknowledged by more and more citizens who coexist in a globalization context in which the mobility of people is multiplying exponentially and the digital revolution has fostered communication among an increasingly high percentage of different realities on the planet.

The creativity game and pedagogical tool entitled *Diversity Kit* that we purport to present in this article, departs from the anthropological and ecological reflection upon the diversity of cultural or social

systems according to the Convention on which it is based. However, it deals with a specific dimension of cultural diversity: the diversity of cultural expressions. In this way, the Convention is an international treaty for the creation of a favorable legal framework in which the diversity of cultural expressions may be reaffirmed and renewed for the benefit of all societies.

More specifically, the Convention aims to promote conditions conducive to the creation, production, distribution/diffusion, access and enjoyment of a larger diversity of expressions attached to cultural activities, goods and services.

Therefore, what should be eligible for protection and promotion when we refer to cultural expressions are “the resulting expressions of the creativity of individuals, groups and societies, and that have cultural content” (art. 4.3 of the 2005 UNESCO Convention). That is, a symbolic meaning, an artistic dimension and cultural values that derive from cultural identities or that express them.

The strategic wealth of cultural identities, understood as active processes in constant reinvention, can be found in the different ways in which their contribution to sustainable development is operationalized. For example, the direct and indirect impacts the creative projects centered on the forms of cultural expression have had. Indeed, there have been economic effects on job creations, but also on social cohesion, and effects of educational and training nature, ecological responsibility, and cultural sustainability, among others.

Diversities is an educational tool that does not exclusively refer to the protection and promotion of cultural activities, goods and services and of cultural or creative industries that produce or distribute them (publishing house, audiovisual, software, design, etc.). Following the spirit of the Convention, the underlying principle of this material understands that culture, as the crucial factor of economic and social development, is the foundation on which we can find all those creative ideas capable of being transformed into projects and cultural proposals to meet different challenges, other than economic or commercial.

Creativity is a human skill that is directly related to the diversity of cultural expressions. It is not an exclusive ability of artists and creators, although it is true that it is the trait that best characterizes these groups.

Creativity has always had, beyond its individual nature, a collective component either in its origin (it is the result of experience and accumulated social knowledge) or in the process of identification and construction of ideas and joint projects. Creativity is, without a doubt, a way of facing reality, which can somehow be instructed and enhanced through play and by formative proposals. Along these lines, creativity progresses towards innovation and is realized through proposals, cultural activities, goods and services.

Finally, *Diversities* departs from another key principle: policies and cultural measures play a key role in the promotion of creativity and protection of the diversity

of cultural expressions. These policies, as it was shown by the rapid ratification of the Convention, are fundamental challenges in the current context.

In this sense, the Convention reasserts the right of the Member States to elaborate cultural policies and recommends taking over specific responsibilities to protect and promote the diversity of cultural expressions: for example, by reinforcing cultural industries, creating appropriate infrastructure or encouraging artistic education.

Yet, these cultural policies and measures are no longer intended exclusively at the national level. The ultimate goal of international cooperation and cooperation for development is to avoid the risks of uniformity and homogenization that the processes of globalization may have on the diversity of cultural expressions worldwide. The Convention proposes a series of courses of action to favor the development of a dynamic cultural sector in every country, to respond to the needs of the developing countries, and to strengthen the bond between culture and development.

The inequalities in the economic and commercial relationships in a globalized world entail an obstacle to global development at a planetary level as never before in the history of humanity. Solidarity and cooperation policies for development are vital for the urgent need of protection of the wealth of diversity of cultural expressions worldwide. Because of this, the Convention insists in binding together solidarity, cultural policies and creativity as key elements of diversity and cultural expressions.

Why a Kit on the Convention of Diversity?

The 10th article of the Convention, which deals with education and public awareness, states the Parties' commitment to foster creativity and an understanding of the importance of the protection and encouragement of diversity in cultural expressions by means of education programs and by raising public awareness on these matters.

In this sense, educating young people in the values and principles present in the text of the Convention is a key area of intervention. When I talk about cultural consumerism, young people are, no doubt, one of the principal protagonists. They are also key agents of change to preserve and promote the diversity of cultural expressions and cultural ecosystems. In this context, the UNESCO's Chair of Cultural Expressions and Creative Industries commissioned the elaboration and dissemination of didactic materials to help educators and cultural mediators to raise awareness about the values and principles present in the text of the Convention among teenagers between the ages of 12 and 16 from Spanish-speaking countries, especially from Central America.

This Kit has been created in collaboration between a team of high school teachers from an Institute in Girona and a team of experts in the Didactics of Social Sciences of the University of Girona. The material was tested in its definition phase in Spain, Colombia, Dominican Republic and Guatemala for its validation, completion and availability

for all Spanish-speaking countries. In the second phase, the material will be adjusted and translated for use in schools in other countries.

Target Audience

The Kit is addressed to professors and cultural mediators who work with young people between the ages of 12 and 16. It is conceived as a true *tool* which facilitates pedagogic work which is at once entertaining and rigorous, and raises awareness about the values of the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of Diversity and Cultural Expressions.

The materials have been designed to be used in an autonomous manner, as they can be adapted to a wide range of situations and realities, to formal as well as informal educational contexts such as museums, libraries, play centers, and cultural centers. This is possible because the Kit is not directly linked to specific curricular contents, which may vary in different countries, but to a transversal educational project related to the values of interculturalism, critical thinking and civic mind-set.

The objectives, methodology and the development of the activities are clearly explained in two documents: The Pedagogic Proposal and The Teaching Suggestions and Instructional Guide available in digital and paper format. The general objectives of the materials are:

- to enable reflection on the value of the diversity of cultural expressions;

- to facilitate the exploration of the strong bonds between creativity and the diversity of cultural expressions;

- to reinforce the positive nature of creativity and its potential;

- to help understand the importance and value of protecting and promoting the diversity of cultural expressions;

- to explain the significance of the Convention in International Law and its implications in the local sphere.

Methodology

Diversities is a didactic tool which departs from observation, selection and analysis of previous experiences in pedagogic work about sociocultural diversity. Since the adoption of the UNESCO's Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity in 2001, various educational proposals aimed at raising awareness about cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue have been fostered in different countries. The analysis of these experiences reveals that:

- it is usual to identify cultural diversity with cultural communities and, specially, with foreign cultural communities;

- it is frequently assumed that cultural diversity as wealth is already an established idea;

- in general, the pedagogic work about the values of diversity in an anthropological sense is more usual than the pedagogic work about the diversity of cultural expressions;

- the methodology and format of educational kits are generally of a conventional character. Texts and

traditional ways of reading as well as the direct transmission of knowledge are prioritized over other resources and procedures that allow room for interaction and the construction of collective proposals.

The pedagogical approach that we adopt in this *Kit* is based on a different and specific point of view. By the same token, the organization of contents seeks to facilitate an understanding about the principles and values that underlie the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of Diversity of Cultural Expressions.

The *Kit* deals with the key contents of the Convention, to name: the protection and promotion of the diversity of cultural expressions, the central role of creativity, the productive cycle of cultural industries, cultural policies and measures, and the cooperation in favor of development. In addition, the *Kit* also promotes the learning of values such as interculturality, tolerance, dialogue and solidarity.

Likewise, the *Kit* is available both in paper format and a digital version to be worked along the new technologies for educational purposes.

On the whole, the relationship between the pedagogic approach, the organization of contents, and the interactive and participative format delineates the pedagogic proposal on which the materials are based.

Pedagogic approach: from the individual to the universal (I - we – others-all)

Diversities adopts a pedagogic strategy that actively involves young people in the first person in defense of the values of the Convention. As it has been mentioned above, cultural diversity is usually identified with foreign cultural communities: what is diverse is *the other*. On the contrary, this material places special emphasis on the construction of the idea of diversity from the observation of one's own individuality -distinct and in constant evolution- and from each young individual's perspective (I) as a starting point.

It is important to highlight that this approach is directly allied to the psychological and evolutionary stage of the age group to which it is aimed: 12 to 16-year-olds. It comprises the period of pre-adolescence and/or adolescence; a stage characterized by the search of meaning and the construction of the individual's own sense of identity. In this stage, young people are in the process of discovering and shaping their own personality, choosing -at a personal level- the range of options, cultural forms and expressions that surround them and contribute to define them¹⁹.

From an educational perspective, this is a fundamental age to lay the groundwork for the development of cultural citizenship values conveyed in the Convention. In order to accomplish this goal, it is essential to appeal to the young person directly so as to involve them in the search for answers and solutions to global

problems in which they are involved as individuals and as citizens in this period of their developmental stage. Otherwise, it might prove very difficult to introduce this developing self to concepts that are often distant from their everyday life. Only through direct dialogue among young people and their realities, it will be easy for them to feel involved in an educational proposal about diversity.

Diversity, the Creativity Game proceeds on the basis of this direct appeal to each one of the participants (*I*) to advance towards the dialogue with the group of peers (*We*) -a form of social relationship which is much more characteristic at their age: *We*. It is worth noting that adolescence is a stage of reasserting this *We*; which stems from the need to share cultural and aesthetic experiences and to develop a *sense of belonging*. Methodologically, this entails delving into a reflective process accompanying the youth in this evolution from *I* to *Us*²⁰.

The aim of the kit is to guide adolescents' awareness of the fact that it is not possible to construct a group or collective (*We*) without a variety of individuals. The next step is simple and gradual, when different people belong to a group (*We*), a new form of otherness emerges: the *Other* or *Others* (other groups). The sum of these groups results in the concept of *All*; which advances towards the universal. The diversity that characterizes each one of the elements addressed (*I-We-Others*) is what makes possible the existence of *All*.

Organization of contents

Based on the approach described in the preceding section, the *Kit* is divided into a general introduction and the contents are articulated around the four central themes of the Convention. Within each theme, conceptual contents precede hand-on activities. Educators are provided with a pedagogical guide and ready-to-use activities to carry out in classes. In addition, the kit includes additional resources and suggestions for evaluation.

The thematic axes are:

- Axis 1: Cultural Diversity
- Axis 2: Creativity and cultural expressions
- Axis 3: Cultural policies and measures.
- Axis 4: Solidarity and cultural cooperation.

To achieve the goals targeted in the educational proposal and to involve young people in the values of the Convention, *Diversity Kit* places emphasis on the first two axes in a special way. The topics in these axes are worked on from a more conceptual perspective: the concept of diversity of cultural expressions and the concept of creativity.

The *Kit* also puts forward the idea of process in each axis. *Diversity as a process* becomes the central idea for the development of the contents of the Convention.

These thematic axes are worked on according to different *centers of interest* related to each one of the activities. The centers of interest and the activities are:

Meanings of ‘diversity’ and positive and/or negative connotations of the concept

Activity 1: Diversity: positive/negative?

Cultural practices

Activity 2: What do you like?

Diversity versus homogeneity

Activity 3: Enrolling in Diversities –the Creativity Game

Creativity as a source of development

Activity 4: From the idea to the creative project

Activity 5: Is creation collective?

Creativity as a practice

Activity 6: What are our creative capacities?

Activity 7: Presenting our project in the Diversities contest

Access and participation in the diversity of cultural expressions

Activity 8: The cycle of the creative project

Activity 9: The interview

Cooperation for development

Activity 10: Solidarity

Activity 11: Debating all the concepts

Equity and equality among cultures

Activity 12: Dialogue about the Convention

Activity 13: Diversities: award ceremony

Activity 14: Our Manifesto

Interactive format and characteristics of the game

The project puts forward the development of an interactive platform on the contents of the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of Diversity of Cultural Expressions. This project will be used by teachers in collaboration with their 12 to 16-year-old students.

The application is conceived as *a collaborative digital space* where a series of activities is put forward under the metaphor of a creativity contest. *Diversities, the Creativity Game* is distributed in three formats: CD-ROOM, online edition (this version enables to download the Kit, but it is not meant to be used online) and a paper format (aimed to facilitate its distribution)

Diversities, the Creativity Game is a multimedia application which articulates the concepts and contents mentioned in the preceding section around a collaborative experience among teachers and students. The model of interaction promotes learning from the experience of *doing with others*. The metaphor of the contest permits for presenting and articulating the contents in a friendly, simple and direct way, capitalizing the main characteristics of the target audience. Similarly, the platform enhances group work, the assimilation and social construction of the contents (conversely to the presentation of ready-made premises) and its integration in projects where different abilities may be deployed in the search of a common goal.

The multimedia platform presents two content units:

- (a) Documents for the teacher.
- (b) The interactive application with the activities for the students.

Both sections are introduced at the beginning of the platform in such a way that the user may access any of the two content units independently. However, the interactive application (b) incorporates an administration label which allows the teacher to access the documents at any time while the activities are being fulfilled.

As regards design, the *Diversity Kit* consolidates its educational proposal throughout the processes involved, not in the outcome. Thus, the target audiences (both students and teachers) are engaged in a narrative project; which in spite of being linear proposes a continuous involvement in the activities and critical reading of the contents. By means of these resources, the *Kit* purports to make the conceptual line expressed in the original project more dynamic, presenting it in a user-friendly way which strengthens collective action and group work. In this sense, the digital content presented here is not proposed as the core of the activities but as a *surface of composition which motivates real interaction among students*.

Specific characteristics of the platform

- The interactive application, which is able to integrate the concepts and approaches of the pedagogic proposal under a friendly and collaborative model, raises the target audience's interest without missing the focus on the project.

- A flexible platform and low technical requirements allow the expansion of its uses where technical conditions are insufficient, without sacrificing the quality of the contents or the learning experiences.

- The project is presented in two different formats: CD-ROOM and paper version to carry out the activities without computers or other digital tools.

- The different formats include resources for the teachers as well as the activities for the classroom, offering a unique package which is easy to implement and navigate, without resorting to external processes or contents.

- The design is dynamic, attractive and sustainable. It is based on graphic resources that appeal to the audience and incorporate the diversity of cultural expressions that characterize the settings where it is going to be used.

- The multimedia application uses graphic and interactive resources which allow each student to represent himself in the digital space (by means of an avatar) to collaborate and construct activities in groups. The icons and layout of the application are based on simple abundant vector graphics with the objective of strengthening the visual attractiveness of the user-interface and fostering the construction of meaning.

- The platform uses audiovisual resources to present content, stimulate participation and setting the atmosphere of the narration.

- The frontal and expositive character of the platform pretends to be decentralized by means of group work and visualization of the collaborative processes in a common surface: the screen. This last element is central to the aesthetic treatment in general.

- *Diversity Kit* creates an experience that, far from reproducing the unidirectional logic, presents a common ground of work which reflects the activity and dynamics of each participant group.

The experience of the Diversity Kit. A conclusion.

Since its launch in June 2010 the *Diversity Kit* has been used in many countries by different user profiles and in different ways. UNESCO offers a workshop addressed to cultural managers, mentors and educators who may be interested in the values of the Kit and its practical use. These workshops have been carried out in many schools associated to UNESCO in Latin American countries such as Dominican Republic, Uruguay, Colombia, and Mexico as well as schools in Spain.

The UNESCO Chair and UNESCO are conscious of the importance of monitoring the project and supporting educators in order to fully develop and implement this type of resources. For this reason, the stakeholders are planning a second stage of the project in which a

virtual platform will be launched: www.diversidades.net. This platform will be a meeting place for all those professionals who use this tool: researchers, teachers, analysts, etc. Even more, the platform will allow stakeholders to give an immediate response to technical or conceptual demands, and more importantly, it will facilitate the conditions for an international network of educators and cultural managers to be interconnected.

Finally, this platform is bound to become an essential element to evaluate and measure the educational and cultural impact of the Kit, enhancing dialogue with and feedback from users. This flow of information will enable the search for more suitable methods for each context so as to measure the impact of this educational resource; which we have purported to present as a specific pedagogical proposal for critical education in cultural diversity.

Notes

¹ Original work in Spanish.

² The author holds a Degree in History, Masters in Cultural Management and Cultura and Law. Associate Profesor in Girona University. Project Coordinator UNESCO Chair of Cultural Policies and Cooperation. Member of INTERARTS Foundation and of the Ibero-American Laboratory of Research and Innovation in Culture and Development. gemma.carbo@udg.edu

³ Teacher of English. Mar del Plata State University. Member of the Research Group on Education and Cultural Studies.

⁴ Teacher of English. Mar del Plata State University. Member of the Research Group on Education and Cultural Studies.

⁵ M.A. in English Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics, King's College. London. Member of the Research Group on Education and Cultural Studies. Mar del Plata State University.

⁶ <http://www.catedraunesco.com/>

⁷ www.diversidades.net

<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/culture/themes/cultural-diversity/2005-convention/highlights/resources/educational-tools/>

⁸ Final report available on: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0009/000970/097064sb.pdf>

⁹ <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0010/001055/105586sb.pdf>

¹⁰ http://portal.unesco.org/es/ev.php-URL_ID=13179&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

¹¹ <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001429/142919s.pdf>

¹² http://portal.unesco.org/culture/es/ev.php-URL_ID=39896&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

¹³ <http://hdr.undp.org/es/informes/mundial/idh2004/>

¹⁴ http://portal.unesco.org/culture/es/ev.php-URL_ID=41117&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.htm

¹⁵ All this forces Education (in capital letters) to focus not so much on the transmission of information, but on the critical analysis of the information and the formation received in other socializing processes, on reconstructing experiential knowledge and on experiencing culture. The mission of education is not to promote particular cultures (although we have to start, obviously, to legitimize particular histories), but to prepare future citizens so that they can live in a more open and interdependent world, and work in the creation of a new cultural framework that would give meaning to existence. The unstoppable emergence of the concept of diversity is also inscribed in this context of vindication of the person and the present; which has brought about the postmodern breakup. Diversity is, at the moment, an absolutely natural and legitimate reality. However, in the modern Western tradition, the different has always been regarded as a threat, a source of fears and suspicion (...) to educate in diversity is the new educational paradigm in the complex global society of the XXI century. Xavier Besalú. *Pluricultural Societies and Education: Interculturality as a Response*. Girona Council 2001.

¹⁶ Delgado, E. (2000). "Cultura, territorio y globalización" en Martín Barbero, J. y López, F. (Coords.) *Cultura y región*. CES-Universidad Nacional, Bogotá, p. 65.

¹⁷ Martín Barbero, J. (2004). 'Pensar la globalización desde la cultura'. Bogotá, Julio de 2004. En: *La globalización en clave cultural – Planetagora* www.planetagora.org/doc/Barcelona_barbero.doc

¹⁸ http://www.culturalrights.net/descargas/drets_culturals239.pdf

¹⁹ A vast number of studies have been carried out about adolescence. For the present article, the PhD dissertation in Educational Psychology on cultural identity construction among the youth

in Chiapas and a piece of work by Roxana Morduchowicz proved to be of particular interest for the present article. Morduchowicz Roxana (coord.) (2008). *Los jóvenes y las pantallas*. Barcelona: Editorial Gedisa, Serie Culturas.

²⁰ Esteban Guitart, Moisès directed by Nadal Farreras, Josep Maria and Vila Mendiburu, José Ignacio, *La Construcción de Identidades en una Muestra de Adolescentes de la Universidad Intercultural de Chiapas. Funciones de la Identidad y Mecanismos Psicosociales Implicados*. Lectura: 19/9/2008.

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Weblography

Cultural rights

<http://www.culturalrights.net/en/>

http://www.culturalrights.net/descargas/drets_culturals239.pdf

Diversity Kit

<http://www.diversidades.net>

<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/culture/themes/cultural-diversity/2005-convention/highlights/resources/educational-tools/>

The UNESCO Chair of Cultural Policies and Cooperation

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